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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) (A/58/471)*]

58/89. International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 51/122 of 13 December 1996, 54/68 of 6 December 1999 and 57/116 of 11 December 2002,

Deeply convinced of the common interest of mankind in promoting and expanding the exploration and use of outer space, as the province of all mankind, for peaceful purposes and in continuing efforts to extend to all States the benefits derived therefrom, and also of the importance of international cooperation in this field, for which the United Nations should continue to provide a focal point,

Reaffirming the importance of international cooperation in developing the rule of law, including the relevant norms of space law and their important role in international cooperation for the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, and of the widest possible adherence to international treaties that promote the peaceful uses of outer space in order to meet emerging new challenges, especially for developing countries,

Seriously concerned about the possibility of an arms race in outer space, and bearing in mind the importance of article IV of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies,[1]

Recognizing that all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, should contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion and strengthening of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes,

Considering that space debris is an issue of concern to all nations,

Noting the progress achieved in the further development of peaceful space exploration and applications as well as in various national and cooperative space projects, which contributes to international cooperation, and the importance of

[1] Resolution 2222 (XXI), annex.

further developing the legal framework to strengthen international cooperation in this field,

Convinced of the importance of the recommendations in the resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development", adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), held at Vienna from 19 to 30 July 1999,[2] and the need to promote the use of space technology towards implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[3]

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III,[4]

Convinced that the use of space science and technology and their applications, in such areas as telemedicine, tele-education and Earth observation, contribute to achieving the objectives of the global conferences of the United Nations that address various aspects of economic, social and cultural development, inter alia, poverty eradication,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its forty-sixth session,[5]

1. *Endorses* the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its forty-sixth session;[5]

2. *Urges* States that have not yet become parties to the international treaties governing the uses of outer space[6] to give consideration to ratifying or acceding to those treaties as well as incorporating them in their national legislation;

3. *Notes* that, at its forty-second session, the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space continued its work, as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/116;[7]

4. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Committee that the Legal Subcommittee, at its forty-third session, taking into account the concerns of all countries, in particular those of developing countries:

(*a*) Consider the following as regular agenda items:

(i) General exchange of views;

(ii) Status and application of the five United Nations treaties on outer space;

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[2] See *Report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 19-30 July 1999* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.I.3), chap. I, resolution 1.

[3] See resolution 55/2.

[4] A/58/174.

[5] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20).

[6] Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (resolution 2222 (XXI), annex); Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space (resolution 2345 (XXII), annex); Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects (resolution 2777 (XXVI), annex); Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space (resolution 3235 (XXIX), annex); and Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (resolution 34/68, annex).

[7] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), chap. II.D.

(iii) Information on the activities of international organizations relating to space law;

(iv) Matters relating to:

a. The definition and delimitation of outer space;

b. The character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, including consideration of ways and means to ensure the rational and equitable use of the geostationary orbit without prejudice to the role of the International Telecommunication Union;

(*b*) Consider the following single issues/items for discussion:

(i) Review and possible revision of the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space;[8]

(ii) Examination of the preliminary draft protocol on matters specific to space assets to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment, opened for signature at Cape Town, South Africa, on 16 November 2001:

a. Considerations relating to the possibility of the United Nations serving as supervisory authority under the preliminary draft protocol;

b. Considerations relating to the relationship between the terms of the preliminary draft protocol and the rights and obligations of States under the legal regime applicable to outer space;

(iii) Contributions by the Legal Subcommittee to the Committee for the preparation of its report to the General Assembly for its review of the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III);

(*c*) Consider the practice of States and international organizations in registering space objects in accordance with the work plan adopted by the Committee;[9]

5. *Notes* that the Legal Subcommittee, at its forty-third session, will submit its proposals to the Committee for new items to be considered by the Subcommittee at its forty-fourth session, in 2005;

6. *Notes also* that, in the context of paragraph 4 (a) (ii) above, the Legal Subcommittee will reconvene its Working Group with the terms of reference as agreed upon by the Legal Subcommittee,[10] to meet for three years, from 2002 to 2004;

7. *Notes further* that, in the context of paragraph 4 (a) (iii) above, the Group of Experts on the Ethics of Outer Space, invited by the Committee at its forty-fourth session to identify which aspects of the report of the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization might need to be studied by the Committee and

[8] See resolution 47/68.

[9] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), para. 199.

[10] See A/AC.105/763 and Corr.1, para. 118, and A/AC.105/787, para.138.

to draft a report, in consultation with other international organizations and in close liaison with the World Commission, presented its report to the Legal Subcommittee, and agrees that the report should be transmitted to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization with the request that it keep the Committee and its subcommittees informed about its activities relating to outer space;

8. *Notes* that, in the context of paragraph 4 (a) (iv) above, the Legal Subcommittee will reconvene its Working Group on the item only to consider matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space;

9. *Agrees* that the Legal Subcommittee should reconvene its Working Group to consider the questions reflected in paragraphs 4 (b) (ii) a. and b. above separately;

10. *Notes with satisfaction* that, in accordance with paragraph 13 of General Assembly resolution 57/116, the Government of Austria continued to convene and facilitate intersessional informal consultations on the composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for the third term, and that consensus agreement was reached, before the forty-sixth session of the Committee, on the extension of the term of office of the current bureaux of the Committee and the future composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies;

11. *Endorses* the agreement reached by the Committee on the extension of the term of office of the current bureau of the Committee and future composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies,[11] on the basis of the measures relating to the working methods of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies,[12] which were endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/56 of 10 December 1997, and notes that, in accordance with paragraph 14 of General Assembly resolution 57/116, the Committee conducted the election of its officers at its forty-sixth session;

12. *Agrees* that the Committee and its subcommittees, at the beginning of their sessions in 2004, should conduct the election of the officers agreed upon by the Committee at its forty-sixth session;[13]

13. *Also agrees* that, in accordance with the measures relating to the future composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies indicated in paragraph 11 above, the Committee at its forty-seventh session, in 2004, should reach agreement on all the officers of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for the next term and that, for this purpose, the Committee should include in the agenda at its forty-seventh session an item on the composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for the period 2006-2007;

14. *Urges* each of the five regional groups to ensure that agreement within the group on the officer to be determined for the period 2006-2007 is reached before the forty-seventh session of the Committee;

15. *Notes* that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its fortieth session, continued its work as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/116;[14]

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[11] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), annex II, paras. 4-9.

[12] Ibid., *Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/52/20), annex I. See also *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), annex II, appendix III.

[13] Ibid., *Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), para. 241.

[14] Ibid., chap. II.C.

16. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Committee that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-first session, taking into account the concerns of all countries, in particular those of developing countries:

(*a*) Consider the following items:

(i) General exchange of views and introduction to reports submitted on national activities;

(ii) United Nations Programme on Space Applications;

(iii) Implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III;

(iv) Matters relating to remote-sensing of the Earth by satellite, including applications for developing countries and monitoring of the Earth's environment;

(*b*) Consider the following items in accordance with the work plans adopted by the Committee:[15]

(i) Space debris;

(ii) Use of nuclear power sources in outer space;

(iii) Space-system-based telemedicine;

(*c*) Consider the following single issues/items for discussion:

(i) Examination of the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit and its utilization and applications, including, inter alia, in the field of space communications, as well as other questions relating to developments in space communications, taking particular account of the needs and interests of developing countries;

(ii) Implementation of an integrated, space-based global natural disaster management system;

(iii) Solar-terrestrial physics;

17. *Notes* that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its forty-first session will submit its proposal to the Committee for a draft provisional agenda for the forty-second session of the Subcommittee, in 2005;

18. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Committee that the symposium to strengthen the partnership with industry should be organized during the first week of the forty-first session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and should address small satellite applications in agriculture, health and human security;

19. *Agrees* that, in the context of paragraphs 16 (a) (ii) and (iii) and 17 above, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its forty-first session should reconvene the Working Group of the Whole;

20. *Also agrees* that, in the context of paragraph 16 (b) (i) above, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-first session, could establish a working group to consider comments from member States of the Committee on the proposals on debris mitigation presented by the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee to the Subcommittee at its fortieth session;[16]

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[15] See A/AC.105/761, para. 130, for item (i); A/AC.105/804, annex III, for item (ii); and *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), para. 138, for item (iii).

[16] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), para. 126.

21. *Further agrees* that, in the context of paragraph 16 (b) (ii) above, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its forty-first session should reconvene its Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space;

22. *Endorses* the United Nations Programme on Space Applications for 2004, as proposed to the Committee by the Expert on Space Applications;[17]

23. *Notes with satisfaction* that, in accordance with paragraph 30 of General Assembly resolution 50/27 of 6 December 1995, the African regional centres for space science and technology education, in the French language and in the English language, located in Morocco and Nigeria, respectively, and the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific continued their education programmes in 2003, that the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education for Latin America and the Caribbean became affiliated to the United Nations and began its education programme, and that the United Nations Programme on Space Applications is providing technical support to the Government of Jordan for the establishment of the regional centre for space science and technology education for Western Asia;

24. *Also notes with satisfaction* the success of the Fourth Space Conference of the Americas, held at Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, from 14 to 17 May 2002, which adopted the Declaration of Cartagena de Indias and the Plan of Action,[18] and notes the desire of Member States in the Latin American and Caribbean region to institutionalize the Space Conference of the Americas;

25. *Welcomes* the memorandum of understanding between the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat and the Pro Tempore Secretariat of the Fourth Space Conference of the Americas, under which the parties demonstrated their intention to collaborate in promoting and implementing joint activities, and invites the Pro Tempore Secretariat to inform the Committee of the work accomplished;

26. *Urges* all Governments, entities of the United Nations system as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental entities conducting space-related activities to take the necessary action for the effective implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III, in particular its resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development",[2] bearing in mind the need to promote the use of space technology towards implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration;[3]

27. *Agrees* that, in accordance with paragraph 30 of General Assembly resolution 55/122 of 8 December 2000, the Committee should include in the agenda of its forty-seventh session an item on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III;

28. *Notes with satisfaction* the work conducted by the twelve action teams that the Committee had established at its forty-fourth and forty-sixth sessions under the voluntary leadership of Member States to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III,[19] and urges Member States to provide full support to the action teams in conducting their work;

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[17] See A/AC.105/790 and Corr.1, sects. II-IV.

[18] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/57/20), annex II.

[19] Ibid., *Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 20* and corrigendum (A/56/20 and Corr.1), paras. 50 and 55; ibid., *Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/57/20), paras. 42 and 43; and ibid., *Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), para. 62.

29. *Also notes with satisfaction* that the Committee made further progress in the preparation of its report under the agenda item on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III for submission to the General Assembly, in order for the Assembly to review and appraise, at its fifty-ninth session, in 2004, in accordance with paragraph 16 of its resolution 54/68, the implementation of the outcome of UNISPACE III and to consider further actions and initiatives, and agrees that, in this context, the Working Group established by the Committee to prepare the above-mentioned report should be reconvened at the forty-seventh session of the Committee to complete its work;

30. *Notes* that in order to advance the preparation of the report of the Committee, mentioned in paragraph 29 above, the Working Group of the Committee could hold informal consultations during the forty-first session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee as well as the forty-third session of the Legal Subcommittee;

31. *Urges* all Member States to contribute to the Trust Fund for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications to support activities to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III, in particular the priority project proposals as recommended by the Committee at its forty-third session;[20]

32. *Recommends* that more attention be paid and political support be provided to all matters relating to the protection and the preservation of the outer space environment, especially those potentially affecting the Earth's environment;

33. *Considers* that it is essential that Member States pay more attention to the problem of collisions of space objects, including those with nuclear power sources, with space debris, and other aspects of space debris, calls for the continuation of national research on this question, for the development of improved technology for the monitoring of space debris and for the compilation and dissemination of data on space debris, also considers that, to the extent possible, information thereon should be provided to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, and agrees that international cooperation is needed to expand appropriate and affordable strategies to minimize the impact of space debris on future space missions;

34. *Urges* all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes;

35. *Emphasizes* the need to increase the benefits of space technology and its applications and to contribute to an orderly growth of space activities favourable to sustained economic growth and sustainable development in all countries, including mitigation of the consequences of disasters, in particular in the developing countries;

36. *Notes* that space science and technology and their applications could make important contributions to economic, social and cultural development and welfare as indicated in the resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development",[2] and notes also that the International Fair on Air and Space to be held at Santiago de Chile early in 2004

[20] Ibid., *Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/55/20), para. 87.

will address in an international conference the question "Space and water: towards sustainable development and human security";

37. *Agrees* that the benefits of space technology and its applications should be prominently brought to the attention of conferences organized within the United Nations system to address global issues relating to social, economic and cultural development and that the use of space technology should be promoted towards achieving the objectives of those conferences and implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration;

38. *Notes with satisfaction* the increased efforts of the Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee as well as the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities to promote the use of space science and technology and their applications in carrying out actions recommended in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation");[21]

39. *Urges* entities of the United Nations system, particularly those participating in the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, to examine, in cooperation with the Committee, how space science and technology and their applications could contribute to implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration, particularly in the areas relating to, inter alia, food security and increasing opportunities for education;

40. *Invites* the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities to continue to contribute to the work of the Committee and to report to the Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the work conducted at its annual session;

41. *Requests* the Committee to continue to consider, as a matter of priority, ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, and agrees that during its consideration of the matter, the Committee could consider ways to promote regional and interregional cooperation based on experiences stemming from the Space Conference of the Americas and the role space technology could play in the implementation of recommendations emerging from the World Summit on Sustainable Development;

42. *Agrees* that the Committee should continue to consider a report on the activities of the International Satellite System for Search and Rescue as a part of its consideration of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications under the agenda item entitled "Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee", and invites Member States to report on their activities regarding the System;

43. *Notes* that in connection with the consideration of the implementation of an integrated, space-based global natural disaster management system, under the agenda item entitled "Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee", during the forty-seventh session of the Committee, a one-day workshop for industry would be organized with the participation of Member States and communications satellite operators to discuss how satellite-based communications could be used during natural disasters;

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[21] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

44. *Requests* the Committee to continue to consider, at its forty-seventh session, its agenda item entitled "Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status";

45. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to consider, at its forty-seventh session, its agenda item entitled "Space and society", and agrees that a special theme for the focus of discussions for the period 2004-2006 should be "Space and education", in accordance with the work plan adopted by the Committee;[22]

46. *Agrees* that a new item entitled "Space and water" should be included in the agenda of the Committee at its forty-seventh session, and urges entities of the United Nations system and invites other intergovernmental entities dealing with issues relating to the use and management of water resources as well as space agencies to contribute to the work of the Committee in this field;

47. *Welcomes* the continued interest of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in becoming a member of the Committee, and, to this end, requests that constructive consultations be conducted as soon as possible within the Committee as well as among regional groups, taking into account the principle of equitable geographical distribution, with a view to reaching a positive and final decision on the membership of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya at the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly;

48. *Requests* the Committee to consider ways to improve participation by member States and entities with observer status in its work, with a view to agreeing on specific recommendations in that regard at its forty-eighth session;

49. *Endorses* the decision of the Committee to grant permanent observer status to the Regional Centre for Remote Sensing of the North African States and the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis;

50. *Invites* the Committee to expand the scope of international cooperation relating to the social, economic, ethical and human dimension in space science and technology applications;

51. *Requests* entities of the United Nations system and other international organizations to continue and, where appropriate, to enhance their cooperation with the Committee and to provide it with reports on the issues dealt with in the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies;

52. *Requests* the Committee to consider and identify new mechanisms of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space to strengthen multilateralism, in accordance with the preamble to the present resolution, and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, including its views on which subjects should be studied in the future.

72nd plenary meeting
9 December 2003

[22] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), para. 239.